

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

S E C R E T STATE 312434

NODIS
EYES ONLY FOR AMBASSADORS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (REPEAT INFO OMITTED)

FOLLOWING REPEAT BERN 5780 ACTION SECSTATE 20 DEC QUOTE

S E C R E T BERN 5780

NODIS

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS HYLAND, WHITE HOUSE

EO 11652: GSS
TAGS: PINS
SUBJ: CORVALAN-BUKOVSKY EXCHANGE

REF: BERN 5753 (NODIS)

SUMMARY: THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE IS A DESCRIPTION OF THE
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CORVALAN-BUKOVSKY AIRPORT EXCHANGE. IT MAY PROVIDE
SOME ATMOSPHERICS; AND A FEW COMMENTS CONCLUDE THE MESSAGE.
END SUMMARY.

1. DURING THE DISCUSSIONS WHICH LED UP TO THE EXCHANGE,
THE PRINCIPAL SOVIET OBJECTIVES APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN TO AVOID
PUBLICITY AND TO HAVE THE EXCHANGE REPRESENTED AS A
BILATERAL SOVIET-U S ARRANGEMENT. THE CHILEAN OBJECTIVE WAS
TO INSURE PUBLICITY AND REPRESENT THE EXCHANGE AS THEIR OWN

INITIATIVE. THE INITIAL SWISS DESIRE WAS TO AVOID EXTENSIVE PUBLICITY, BUT THE SWISS QUICKLY BOWED TO THE INEVITABLE.

2. THE SOVIETS MADE IT CLEAR THAT THEY WOULD NOT ACQUIESCE IN ANY CHILEAN PRESENCE NEAR THE SOVIET AIRCRAFT. CHILEAN AMBASSADOR SILVA INITIALLY AGREED TO GREET CORVALAN AT THE LUFTHANSA PLANE AND PROCEED TO THE PRIVATE ROOM IN THE AIRPORT. ON THE MORNING OF THE EXCHANGE, HOWEVER, SILVA MADE REPEATED AND DETERMINED EFFORTS TO TURN THIS ARRANGEMENT AROUND. WE COMPROMISED TO AN ARRANGEMENT THAT HAD SILVA GREET BUKOVSKY ON THE TARMAC, IN FRONT OF THE ENTRANCE TO THE PRIVATE ROOM. THIS APPEARS TO HAVE MET HIS MINIMAL NEEDS FOR OPEN-AIR MOTION PICTURE COVERAGE OF HIS CONVERSATION WITH BUKOVSKY. HE HAD IMPORTED A CHILEAN CAMERA MAN, A RUSSIAN SPEAKING CHILEAN DIPLOMAT FROM THE U S., AND A SUBORDINATE FROM HIS OWN MISSION FOR THE OCCASION.

3. THE SWISS ALLOWED THE PRESS TO TAKE PICTURES FROM THE ROOF OF THE AIR TERMINAL, WHERE THEY HAD A DISTANT VIEW OF THE LUFTHANSA ARRIVAL BUT CONSIDERABLY LESS ABILITY TO VIEW THE PROCEEDINGS AT THE AEROFLOT PLANE. (I WAS IDENTIFIED WITH A LARGE ARROW IN A SWISS NEWSPAPER AS SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE CHILEAN COMMUNIST PARTY.)

4. THE EXCHANGE BEGAN WHEN CORVALAN AND HIS WIFE, ACCOMPANIED
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BY A CHILEAN SECURITY AGENT, EMERGED FROM THE LUFTHANSA PLANE. CORVALAN WAS PINK CHEEKED AND LOOKED, I THOUGHT, IN REASONABLY GOOD PHYSICAL CONDITION - ALTHOUGH I CANNOT KNOW WHAT PRIVATIONS AND DAMAGE TO HIS HEALTH MIGHT HAVE BEEN THE TRUE INNER REALITY. AMBASSADOR SILVE GREETED CORVALAN BRIEFLY, DOING LITTLE MORE THAN WISHING HIM LUCK. THE CORVALANS AND I THEN DROVE TO THE SOVIET AIRCRAFT. CORVALAN SPENT THAT TIME DESCRIBING HIS EXPERIENCES IN DETENTION AND THE CHILEAN GOVERNMENT'S BOORISHNESS IN GIVING HIM BUT A FEW SECONDS TO BID FAREWELL TO HIS CLOSE RELATIVES. HE ACKNOWLEDGED U S EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN CHILE, INCLUDING AN AMERICAN ROLE IN HIS RELEASE. WHEN I DESCRIBED THE ARRANGEMENTS THE SOVIETS HAD MADE, HE COMMENTED WITH A WRY SMILE: "SO THEY ARE GOING TO PUT ME INSTANTLY ON A PLANE FOR MOSCOW, EH." HE DID NOT INDICATE ANY RELUCTANCE TO GO THROUGH WITH THE ARRANGEMENT NOR DID HE MAKE ANY REQUEST THAT IT BE CHANGED. HE AND HIS WIFE WERE CORDIAL.

5. AT THE SOVIET AIRCRAFT I INTRODUCED THE CORVALANS TO AMBASSADOR GUERASSIMOV AND OTHER SOVIET OFFICIALS

WHO WERE THERE. BUKOVSKY TOLD ME LATER THAT "BARANOV", WHO HE CLAIMED WAS ANDROPOV'S DEPUTY, WAS AMONG THEM. THE INEVITABLE BOUQUETS OF FLOWERS WERE PRESENTED, AND LITTLE SPEECHES WERE MADE. THE SOVIETS HAD INSISTED THAT BUKOVSKY AND HIS FAMILY BE CONCEALED BEHIND A LARGE OIL TRUCK, SO THEY COULD NOT VIEW THE PROCEEDINGS. (THEY HAD GOOD REASON, FOR DOING SO, FROM THEIR POINT OF VIEW, AS BUKOVSKY LATER TOLD ME HE HAD BEEN MOST ANXIOUS TO GREET AND TALK WITH CORVALAN.)

6. BUKOVSKY'S SISTER AND SICK NEPHEW PROCEEDED IN AN AMBULANCE TO THE ZURICH CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL. WE HAD PROVIDED AN INTERPRETER - THE MOTHER-IN-LAW OF A
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FORMER ZURICH CONSULATE STAFFER - AND I BELIEVE THIS OPERATION WENT WITHOUT HITCH. APPARENTLY THE BOY'S CONDITION IS NOT IN ANY CRISIS PHASE, AND THE DOCTORS' PRELIMINARY THOUGHTS ARE THAT HE COULD BE TRANSPORTED FOR SYSTEMATIC TREATMENT TO WHATEVER PLACE THE BUKOVSKYS MIGHT SELECT.

7. BUKOVSKY LOOKED A BIT TRANSLUCENT AROUND THE EYES, AND TOLD ME HE HAD BEEN IN HANDCUFFS, EVEN ON THE AIRCRAFT, UNTIL THE SOVIET BORDER HAD BEEN CROSSED. HE IS INTELLIGENT, ATTRACTIVE, AND RESPONSIVE.

8. IN THE CAR I EXPLAINED AMBASSADOR SILVA'S PLAN TO DELIVER A MESSAGE FROM GENERAL PINOCHET, INVITE BUKOVSKY TO CHILE, AND ASK BUKOVSKY FOR ANY MESSAGE HE HAD FOR THE CHILEAN PEOPLE. I EXPLAINED THAT SILVA WOULD HAVE A TAPE RECORDER AND TAKE MOVIES. I ASKED BUKOVSKY IF HE KNEW WHO THE HEAD OF THE CHILEAN GOVERNMENT WAS. BUKOVSKY INDICATED THAT HE KNEW PINOCHET'S NAME AND WAS ACQUAINTED WITH THE PRESENT CHILEAN GOVERNMENT'S REPUTATION (WHICH HE DID NOT ADMIRE). I EXPLAINED THAT BUKOVSKY AND HIS FAMILY COULD TRAVEL TO THE UNITED STATES AT ANY TIME, AND PASSED ON NEWS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LEYDEN'S OFFER OF A POSITION. BUKOVSKY INDICATED HE HAD NO INTENTION OF GOING TO CHILE, AND ASKED MY ADVICE ON HANDLING THE CHILEAN AMB. I NOTED THAT THE CHILEAN GOVT HAD TAKEN SIGNIFICANT ACTION IN RELEASING CORVALAN IN EXCHANGE FOR HIMSELF, AND ADVISED BUKOVSKY TO GIVE A COURTEOUS REPLY TO SILVA'S REPRESENTATIONS. (THIS HE DID - TO SILVA. THE CONVERSATION BETWEEN BUKOVSKY, HIS MOTHER, AND ME WAS PRIVATE. (THE ONLY OTHER PERSON IN THE CAR, MY CHAUFFEUR, UNDERSTANDS NO RUSSIAN.)

9. AFTER THE EXCHANGE ON THE AIR STRIP BETWEEN AMB SILVA AND BUKOVSKY, I CONDUCTED THE BUKOVSKYS INTO THE
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PRIVATE ROOM WHILE THE CHILEANS WENT OFF TO ANOTHER
PRIVATE ROOM TO TELEPHONE SANTIAGO.

10. THE BRITISH ACTOR, DAVID MARKHAM, SENT IN HIS CARD
AND WAS PROMPTLY ADMITTED WITH A YOUNG RUSSIAN-SPEAKING
LADY ACCOMPANYING HIM. APPARENTLY, DAVID MARKHAM HAD
SPONSORED AND VOUCHERED FOR BUKOVSKY WITH THE BRITISH
AUTHORITIES, AND WAS IN SOME SORT OF FOSTER-FATHER OR
FOSTER-UNCLE RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM. THE BUKOVSKYS WERE
OVERJOYED TO SEE HIM. MARKHAM PRESSED BUKOVSKY HARD
TO CLIMB ON A PLANE IMMEDIATELY FOR ENGLAND,
BUT BUKOVSKY'S MOTHER - STRONG WOMAN - MADE SURE
BUKOVSKY WAS NOT CROWDED TO A PREMATURE DECISION.
BUKOVSKY WAS FULL OF QUESTIONS TO MARKHAM AND TO
ME ABOUT HIS MANY WARM FRIENDS IN THE FOREIGN PRESS CORPS IN
MOSCOW WHOM HE HAD KNOWN PRIOR TO HIS DETENTION.
BUKOVSKY AGREED TO ALLOW THE PRESS TO TAKE PICTURES ON
CONDITION THEY NOT ASK QUESTIONS UNTIL HE HAD A NIGHT'S
SLEEP. THIS ARRANGEMENT BROKE DOWN INSTANTLY, OF COURSE.
NEVERTHELESS, BUKOVSKY WAS ABLE TO CONFINED HIMSELF TO A
BRIEF SERIES OF COMMENTS, PUNCTUATED BY HIS REITERATED
PROMISE TO HOLD A FULL-SCALE PRESS CONFERENCE ON SUNDAY.

11. THE SWISS CONSULTED AMENSTY INTERNATIONAL IN MAKING
ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE BUKOVSKY' LODGING. I HOPE AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL, HAVING MADE THE ARRANGEMENTS, WILL BE
PREPAPRED TO PICK UP THE TAB.

12. COMMENT: WHO ACHIEVED HIS PURPOSES? THE SOVIETS
SUCCEEDED IN AVOIDING PUBLICITY, EXCEPT AT LONG DISTANCE,
DURING THE EXCHANGE ITSELF. BEYOND THAT, THEY HAVE HAD
PRECIOUS LITTLE SUCCESS IN AVOIDING UNFLATTERING NEWS
AND COMMENTARY ON LACK OF FREEDOM IN THEIR COUNTRY,
THEIR FAILURE TO CHANGE THEIR WAYS IN RESPONSE TO THEIR
HELSINKI UNDERTAKINGS, ETC. WHILE SUCCESSFUL IN EN-
SURING THAT EVENTS AROUND THEIR OWN AIRCRAFT WERE
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BILATERAL BETWEEN THEMSELVES AND THE US,
THEY DID NOT CONVEY ANY SUCH IMPRESSION TO THE WORLD.

THE CHILEANS HAVE SUCCESSFULLY THROWN THE SPOT-
LIGHT ON SOVIET HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS. THEY FAILED
HOWEVER TO ESTABLISH A DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE SOVIETS
AND THEMSELVES. IN FACT, CORVALAN IS BEING PORTRAYED
AS BEING AS INNOCENT AS BUKOVSKY - OR BERLINGUER
(ONE FORGETS THAT THE FRENCH AND ITALIAN COMMUNISTS HAVE
NOT YET TASTED POWER). BUKOVSKY'S SOMEWHAT UNBECOMING
CRACK AT HIS PRESS CONFERENCE ABOUT AN EXCHANGE OF

BRESHNEV FOR PINOCHET CAUGHT THE MOOD OF THE WORLDS
REACTION - AT LEAST AS SEEN FROM THIS SWISS CITY.

I BELIEVE THE WORLD IS BETTER OFF FOR THE SOVIET
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT - NO MATTER HOW MUCH THEY TRY TO CONCEAL
IT - THAT POLITICAL PRISONERS IN BOTH THE SOVIET UNION
AND CHILE FOUND RELEASE. THIS HAS LENT A CERTAIN
LEGITIMACY TO DISSIDENCE. I AM SURE THE SOVIETS FELT
A NEED TO DEMONSTRATE TO THEIR BRETHREN AROUND THE WORLD
THAT THEY WILL PAY A HIGH PRICE TO LIBERATE COMMUNIST
CHIEFS FROM "FASCIST" JAILS. BUT FOR THIS, I DOUBT IF
THE SOVIETS COULD HAVE BROUGHT THEMSELVES TO AGREE TO

THE EXCHANGE. DAVIS
UNQTE. ROBINSON

SECRET

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